

Operations Team Meeting Summary
November 27-28, 2013
Portland, OR

Participants: Pres Pate, Rob Andrews, Dave Donaldson, Russell Porter, Cindy Thomson, Dick Brame, Bob Clark, Richard Cody, Mark Fisher, Pat Campfield, Mike Cahall, Jason Didden, Josh Demello, Ron Salz, Gordon Colvin (MRIP Program Manager), Forbes Darby and Scott Ward (Communications and Education Team), Lauren Dolinger Few (Information Management Team)

The MRIP Operations Team met in Portland, OR November 27-28, 2012. The team received updates on general MRIP activities, including the status of several OT projects, discussed the role and responsibilities of OT members, and evaluated OT research proposals.

MRIP Updates

Gordon Colvin, Forbes Darby and Lauren Dolinger Few provided updates on general MRIP issues, the Communications and Education Team and the Information Management Team, respectively. In addition, OT members provided updates on the following MRIP projects:

1. NC Intercept Survey Pilot Study: Ron Salz provided an update on the status of the pilot study to test and alternative design for the Access-Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS). A revised sampling design for the APAIS that addresses recommendations from the NRC Review was developed and tested in NC in 2010. A report describing the results of the study has been peer reviewed and submitted to the OT for review and potential certification as an MRIP methodology. The OT recognized the benefits of the new design and recommended certification of the design, but urged caution is how project results are communicated. Specifically, comparisons of precision of survey estimates between the MRFSS design and the tested design are not appropriate and are subject to misinterpretation. The OT recommended that the project team identify more appropriate ways to compare the efficiency of the surveys.
2. Volunteer Angler Surveys: Jason Didden provided a summary of a project to evaluate the utility of opt-in data collection programs for collecting recreational fishing catch and effort data. Several states and recreational fishing groups administer opt-in data collection programs where anglers can record fishing activity. The project supported a workshop in February 2012 to review the characteristics of several specific programs and identify potential benefits and limitations. A report summarizing the workshop has been reviewed by the OT and is available on the MRIP website.
3. Gulf of Mexico For-Hire Logbook Project: Dave Donaldson provided an update on a project to design and test a logbook reporting program for Federally permitted for-hire vessels in portions of the Gulf of Mexico. The project did not achieve a complete census of for-hire effort or catch, but logbooks, accompanied by dockside validation, may provide a means for estimating catch and effort for the sector. A report describing the results of the project was reviewed by the OT and is currently undergoing a peer review. A follow-up report describing an estimation design that utilizes logbook data is expected in December. The peer review will be completed in early February.

4. Developing Improved Fishing Effort Surveys: Rob Andrews provided an overview of projects that have been implemented to develop an improved data collection design for collecting recreational fishing effort data. Pilot studies have demonstrated the benefits of mail survey designs that sample from both angler license databases and residential address frames. The Mixed-Mode, Dual-Frame Effort Survey is currently underway in NC, SC, GA and FL and is comparing results collected from telephone and mail surveys. The survey will continue through wave 6, 2012. A follow-up study was implemented in MA, NY, NC and FL beginning in wave 5, 2012 and will continue through wave 6, 2012. \
5. Pacific RecFIN Survey Updates: Russell Porter provided an update of MRIP projects supporting the enhancement of recreational fishing surveys administered by CA, OR and WA. The states have implemented several pilot studies to evaluate data collection designs and test assumptions and improved methodologies.

OT Roles and Responsibilities

The team discussed the roles and responsibilities of OT members. Generally, team members expressed satisfaction with their current roles and the level of commitment required to satisfy OT responsibilities. However, the team expressed a need for more formal guidelines for reviewing project proposals to ensure that reviews are consistent. Pres Pate and Rob Andrews will draft guidelines and distribute to the team for review prior to the next round of proposals.

Proposal Evaluation

The Team received 17 proposals for consideration. One of the proposals, ORBS Database Improvements, was withdrawn by the project team prior to OT evaluation and re-submitted for funding consideration by the MRIP Information Management Team.

The remaining 16 proposals were evaluated, scored and commented on by individual OT members prior to the meeting. Specifically, OT members were asked to identify strengths and weaknesses for each project and score each project from zero (should not be funded) to 10 (best project ever). During the meeting, the OT discussed each project and made a determination as to whether each project should or should not be recommended for funding. The projects that were recommended for funding were prioritized based upon the average scores among all of the OT members.

The Team recommends 13 of the 16 projects for funding, with funding for several of the projects conditional upon follow-up by the project team. Funding recommendations and conditions for funding are provided in Table 1. Projects are listed in priority order, based upon the average scores among all OT members. In the event of insufficient funding to cover the costs of all recommended projects, the OT recommends funding projects at 100% of requested funding levels beginning with the highest priority projects and funding as many projects as the budget permits.

Table 1. OT funding recommendations and funding conditions.

Project Title	Cost	Funding Recommendation	Comments
Proportional Standard Error and Management Uncertainty in Recreational Data Collection on the Atlantic Coast – Year 2	\$33,750.00	Y	None
Pilot surveys at unsampled ports and shoreline to calibrate adjustment factors in the expansion of catch, effort and CPUE from the existing creel survey in Guam	\$100,000.00	Y	None
Design and test effort surveys for shoreline fishing in HMRFS	TBD	Y (Conditional)	Proposal was submitted prior to the completion of a project report describing results of an August 2012 MRIP workshop to review and assess data collection designs for HI. Subsequently, the proposal was lacking in detail. The workshop report has since been completed, and the project team will be asked to provide detailed descriptions of data collection designs to be tested prior to funding.
Discarded Fish Identification in the Private Boat Mode	\$201,125.00	Y	None
Electronic Data Accessibility: Phase Two of Electronic Data Project	\$55,700.00	Y	Request review by and coordination with MRIP Information Management Team.

Project Title	Cost	Funding Recommendation	Comments
Survey of Recreational Boat Fishers in the US Virgin Islands	\$245,150.50	Y (Conditional)	<p>The OT approves the concept of developing and testing recreational fishing data collection designs in USVI. However, the design provided in the proposal is premature considering that the OT has not received a project report describing results of a September 2012 MRIP workshop to review and assess data collection designs for USVI. The OT requests that the project team re-evaluate the proposed data collection designs once the workshop report has been completed. The OT is also concerned about the composition of the project team, specifically the proposed project leadership by a private consultant and the lack of representation from SEREO/SEFSC staff. The OT recommends that the project be coordinated with SERO and/or SEFSC, and that a representative from a government entity or stakeholder group assume a leadership role on the project team.</p>

Project Title	Cost	Funding Recommendation	Comments
Pilot study of the queen conch (<i>Strombus gigas</i>) and spiny lobster (<i>Panulirus argus</i>) recreational fishery in Puerto Rico	\$175,000.00	Y (Conditional)	As with the USVI proposal, the OT approves the concept of developing and testing new recreational fishing data collection designs in Puerto Rico. However, the design provided in proposal is premature considering that the OT has not received a project report describing results of a September 2012 MRIP workshop to review and assess data collection designs for Puerto Rico. The OT requests that the project team re-evaluate the design once the workshop report has been completed. The OT is also concerned about the composition of the project team, specifically the proposed project leadership by a private consultant and the lack of representation from SEREO/SEFSC staff. The OT recommends that the project be coordinated with SERO and/or SEFSC, and that a representative from a government entity or stakeholder group assume a leadership role on the project team.
Internet based angler logs as a source of fishery dependent data	\$199,916.00	Y (Conditional)	The OT requests additional details about the project budget, specifically, the line item for the Snook Foundation Contract with FWC.
Assessment of External Data Indicators as Predictors of Fishing Effort	\$97,615.00	Y	None
ORBS Port of Nehalem Sampling	\$50,384.00	Y (Conditional)	The OT requests that the proposal be rewritten to highlight the research nature of the project and also describe the ultimate intent of the project (e.g. how many years of funding will be sufficient to develop appropriate correction factors?).

Project Title	Cost	Funding Recommendation	Comments
Washington MRIP Consultant's Review Sampling Ocean Fisheries in "Shoulder" Months	\$132,127.37	Y (Conditional)	The OT requests that the proposal be rewritten to highlight the research nature of the project and also describe the ultimate intent of the project (e.g. how many years of funding will be sufficient to develop appropriate correction factors?).
ORBS Significant Port Additional Sampling	\$103,334.00	Y (Conditional)	The OT requests that the proposal be rewritten to highlight the research nature of the project and also describe the ultimate intent of the project (e.g. how many years of funding will be sufficient to develop appropriate correction factors?).
ORBS Astoria Video Boat Count	\$62,488.00	Y (Conditional)	The OT requests that the proposal be rewritten to highlight the research nature of the project and describe comparisons between the proposed and existing data collection designs.
Smart Device Fishing Data Logging and Reporting Assistance Application Pilot	\$55,000.00	N	The reporting device would not be associated with the HI Commercial Marine License (CML) database. Subsequently, it would not be possible to determine if and when participating vessels submitted data via the device. MRIP consultant review of for-hire data collection designs recommended logbook reporting that is mandated, enforced and validated. The proposed design includes none of these attributes.
Electronic Data Modeling: Phase Three of Electronic Data Project	\$46,410.00	N	The proposal was withdrawn by the OT sponsor at the meeting.
Estimating the Use of Descending Devices by Washington Recreational Anglers	\$89,719.00	N	The project is not a research project and not appropriate for OT funding.
Total Cost of Recommended Projects	\$1,456,589.87		

